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December 28, 2005

Mike Barton, Commissioner
Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
3132 Channel Drive
Juneau, AK 99801-7898

Dear Commissioner Barton:

I would like to take this opportunity to present the Interisland Ferry Authority's Board of Directors comments on the Draft STIP for 2006-2008, Southeast Region. We also commented on the STIP at the MTAB teleconference on 12/20/05 and have made our position known to the Southeast Conference Transportation Committee.

Please consider adding the following projects to the 2006-2008 STIP:

1. South Mitkof Paving to and including the new ferry terminal-The highest priority of items not in the STIP is the upgrading, bridge replacement and paving of the South Mitkof Highway from Petersburg to and including the new South Mitkof Terminal site. The IFA and the AMHS will be using the terminal and surface traffic between Petersburg and the new ferry terminal will be significant, especially during the summer months. The road and bridge have been identified as needing upgrading for many years. With the advent of the IFA and FVF service to S Mitkof, the time for the work to be started is now.
2. New Ferry Terminal in Wrangell- A new IFA terminal in Wrangell is extremely important to the community of Wrangell and to the efficient operation of the Northern IFA service between Wrangell/Coffman Cove/South Mitkof. Eleven conflicts have been identified with the AMHS over the next summer's operation at the AMHS terminal and a new terminal owned and maintained by the City of Wrangell and used by the IFA will benefit everyone, including the AMHS.
3. Southern Gateway Shuttle Ferry- We believe that the AMHS should proceed with the design and construction of the Southern Gateway Ferry for dedicated service between Ketchikan and Prince Rupert. Page 56 of the current SATP recommends the development of this ferry and the design study review is completed on the vessel. The funds have been appropriated for final design and the Capital Budget has an authorization of \$50 million for the new vessel.

The IFA also supports the implementation of the Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan (SATP) signed by the Governor in August of 2004. We believe that the STIP should implement the recommendations and timelines presented in the SATP final report.

We thank you for this opportunity to have our input into the STIP Draft for 2006-2008.

Sincerely,

Dennis Watson, Chairman

Cc: Andy Hughes, Jeff Ottessen, MTAB, SE Conference, IFA Board of Directors

INTER-ISLAND FERRY AUTHORITY

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